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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC ACTS TO CONFRONT ‘IRS DEBT’ SCAM ROBOCALLS &  
MALICIOUS CALLER-ID SPOOFING**  
*‘Do-Not-Originate’ Lets Phone Companies Stop Clearly-Fake Robocalls*

WASHINGTON, March 23, 2017 – The Federal Communications Commission today took important next steps in efforts to protect consumers against illegal robocalls, including scam calls, building on its work with the industry-led Robocall Strike Force.

Unwanted calls – including illegal robocalls and telemarketing calls – are the top consumer complaint the FCC receives each year, with about 200,000 complaints annually. It is estimated that U.S. consumers received approximately 2.4 billion robocalls per month in 2016.

In Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today, the FCC is seeking comment on rules that would codify the “Do-Not-Originate” initiative proposed by the FCC and launched by the industry strike force, allowing the effort to continue to grow and help more consumers. The proposed rules would allow carriers to block spoofed caller ID numbers associated with phone lines that do not actually dial out, without running afoul of FCC rules requiring carriers to complete all calls. A test of this concept, conducted by Strike Force members with the FCC’s permission, reduced IRS scam calls by about 90 percent in the third quarter of 2016.

This particular type of spoofing has included numbers that purport to be from the Internal Revenue Service, making the spoofed calls especially pernicious. The proposed rules would also allow carriers to continue to block calls upon the request of the subscriber to an originating number, like IRS lines not used for outbound calls. Additional proposed rules would also empower providers to block spoofed robocalls when the spoofed caller ID cannot possibly be valid, including numbers that have not been assigned to anyone yet or purport to be from an area code that does not exist.

The FCC is also seeking public input on how to address spoofed calls from international locations, where scammers often hide to avoid U.S. legal processes. Consumer complaints to the FCC, law enforcement actions against scammers, and media reports show many of the calls that are most harmful to consumers may originate overseas and thus pose challenges for FCC enforcement. International origination of calls may, however, also provide clues for careful and appropriate blocking of calls that have a very high likelihood of being malicious.

The Commission today also adopted a Notice of Inquiry which seeks public comment on how to further enable carriers to block illegal robocalls before they can reach consumers. The Commission is asking how to create a safe harbor for providers from FCC call completion rules

when they rely on objective criteria to identify and block calls that are highly likely to be fraudulent, illegal, or spoofed robocalls. That is, if the carrier can reasonably surmise that a call is a scam call using fake caller ID, carriers could be able to proactively block those calls. The Commission is seeking feedback on how to move this idea forward while minimizing blocking of lawful calls and helping clarify carriers' responsibilities in making this analysis accurately.

The industry-administered Do-Not-Originate program is operational today. Entities with assigned phone numbers that are never used to originate outbound calls but have been used for malicious spoofing can contact their carrier to participate. The FCC is working with the industry through the Robocall Strike Force to help facilitate this process and encourage effective inter-carrier communication of this information.

Action by the Commission March 23, 2017 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry (FCC 17-24). Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn and O'Rielly approving and issuing separate statements.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*